

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Please amend the claims as shown.

1. (Currently Amended) Process for producing anhydrous alkali sulfide, comprising spray drying a liquid substance preparation selected from the group consisting of an alkali sulfide solution, alkali sulfide suspension, alkali sulfide dispersion and alkali sulfide water of crystallisation melt, into a chamber and atomizing said liquid substance preparation in contact with a hot gas stream consisting of inert drying gas loaded with pure superheated water vapour, and optionally, an inert drying gas, to dry said ~~composition~~ preparation and thereby produce anhydrous alkali sulfide and recycling exhaust gas without introduction of additional inert gas and drying in pure superheated water vapour.

2. (Previously Presented) Process for producing anhydrous alkali sulfide according to claim 1, wherein the drying is performed under normal pressure or a slight overpressure of $\Delta p=0$ to 200 mbar above ambient pressure.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Previously Presented) Process for producing anhydrous alkali sulfide according to claim 1, further comprising recycling the drying gas, without adding additional inert gas in stationary operation and excess water vapour is removed by condensation so that it is free from exhaust gases.

5. - 11. (Cancelled)